

### Amendments to Claims

1. (Previously Presented) A method of metal fusion bonding components together, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a flexible articulate tubular device separate from welding apparatus for producing metal fusion for bonding the components, the articulate tubular device having an inlet at one end of the tubular device for receiving a supply of gaseous flux and a terminus at the other end of the tubular device for discharge of gaseous flux;

articulating said flexible articulate tubular device to direct said terminus along a target weld path to be progressively formed between said components; and

supplying a gaseous flux along said flexible articulate tubular device, out said terminus, and toward said target weld path as it is progressively formed.

2. (Original) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining the position of said terminus of said flexible articulate tubular device in accordance with the position of a leading edge of a weld bead along said target weld path.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Original) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 1, wherein said step of articulating is conducted in accordance with said target weld path having an irregular path.

5. (Original) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 1, wherein said step of supplying involves extending a gas feed line through said flexible articulate tubular device.

6. (Original) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of initially positioning said flexible articulate tubular device in relation to said components.

7. (Original) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 6, further comprising the steps of:

conveying visual signals from said terminus of said flexible articulate tubular device;  
and

translating and articulating said flexible articulate tubular device in response to said visual signals.

8. (Original) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 6, further comprising the step of further positioning said flexible articulate tubular device so as to trace said target weld path.

9. (Original) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 8, wherein said further positioning step comprises the step of measuring temperature at two or more locations at said terminus of said flexible articulate tubular device.

10. (Original) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 9, wherein said further positioning step further comprises articulating said flexible articulate tubular device in response to said measuring temperature step.

11. (Original) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 1, wherein said components comprise at least a pair of tubular components.

12. (Original) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 11, wherein said articulating step comprises articulating said flexible articulate tubular device within said at least a pair of tubular components.

13. (Previously Presented) A method of metal fusion bonding an assembly of components, the assembly having an upper side for engagement by welding apparatus and an underside, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a flexible articulate tubular device separate from welding apparatus for producing metal fusion for bonding the components, the articulate tubular device having an inlet at one end of the tubular device for receiving a supply of gaseous flux and having a terminus at the other end of the tubular device for discharge of gaseous flux;

positioning said flexible articulate tubular device at an underside of said components in correspondence with a target weld path to be progressively formed between said components;

articulating said flexible articulate tubular device to direct said terminus along said target weld path as it is progressively formed; and

supplying a gaseous flux through said flexible articulate tubular device out of said terminus and toward said target weld path.

14. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 13, wherein said components comprise a plurality of tubular structures and the flexible articulate tubular device is positioned and articulated inside a tubular structure to supply gaseous flux to said target weld path.

15. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, wherein said positioning step comprises:

conveying visual signals from said terminus of said flexible articulate tubular device;  
and

translating and articulating said flexible articulate tubular device in response to said visual signals.

16. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, further comprising:  
measuring temperature at two or more locations at said terminus of said flexible articulate tubular device; and

articulating said flexible articulate tubular device in response to said measuring temperature step.

17-22. (Canceled)